

EFFECTIVE AND SYMBOLIC INEQUALITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

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Last week the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP) presented the [First Development Report on Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) with an interesting media campaign.

They have chosen the most widely read generalist newspaper in Spain, [El País](#), as the public launch platform. In a special supplement called "On the march towards equality" you can see introductory data (in its digital edition) and especially opinion articles on the origin and solution of inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean by notable intellectuals, experts, writers and artists. Among them, various people stand out such as Rubén Blades, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, Jorge Castañeda, Michelle Bachelet, Santiago Roncagliolo, Antonio Skármeta, Daniel Barenboim, Ángeles Mastretta, Enrique V. Iglesias or Francis Fukuyama among others.



Although there are studies that indicate the need for equality to achieve economic growth and development at a global level with empirical evidence, it still seems necessary to remind our politicians of the relevance of ending the persistent asymmetries, especially as a means in which effective freedoms are developed.

Three features can be highlighted from this report: that inequality in the region is high, that it is persistent, and that it is reproduced in a context of low socioeconomic mobility.

The Indian economist and Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen delved into the concepts of effective freedom and human capabilities as development conditions. Their contributions serve as support and a conceptual basis for this Report, which indicates that in order to achieve effective development, two paths must necessarily be undertaken at the same time: first, dealing with the initial conditions, eliminating "operational restrictions" (constraints in health, education, income); and the second, to focus on developing the subjective elements that influence the determination of the aspirations and achievements of citizens.

This second point is the one that seems to be more easily ignored by politicians in many Latin American countries. These are contextual factors that affect the generation of ambitious goals and the level of autonomy of people to achieve them.

Sport and culture are very effective instruments to develop the capacities of "I can". In countries like Bolivia, one suffers, in addition to a vicious circle of exclusion, from a lack of eagerness to win, not because one does not want to earnestly win, but because many times there is no conviction of one's ability to achieve it. It is difficult for us to visualize ourselves playing the role of winner.

Reversing this is achieved with popular paradigm shifts. Currently, the national imaginary regarding the symbolic exclusion of indigenous groups has progressed a lot. We will see to what point progress has been made in reducing effective exclusion. Less than advertised I'm afraid.

It should be noted that with a meager development of the humanistic and creative sense, it will be very difficult to cover these deficiencies.

The investment of public resources in athletes, artists and intellectuals goes beyond the frivolous nationalist competition. It is a matter of developing our heterogeneous identity factors, relying on referents and models, and not concentrating these resources as instruments to capture "cultural power."

Photo: eloquent image by Bolivian photographer Sergio Ribero taken in Madrid.

There are no comments yet.